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RECOLLECTIONS OF A BOYHOOD IN  
GEORGETOWN.

BY WILLIAM A. GORDON.

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## RECOLLECTIONS OF A BOYHOOD IN GEORGETOWN.

By WILLIAM A. GORDON.

(Read before the Society, April 18, 1916.)

At the present time when Washington has grown to be a large city, when improved housing and better sanitation have made living more pleasant and life safer, and when lifelong residents know even by sight but few of those passed on the street, it is difficult to picture what were the surroundings, what the life, and what the manners and customs of the people who lived here sixty or seventy years ago. Thanks to the research of students and the many books which have been written, we are well informed as to the Colonial and Revolutionary history of our people. This Society has done much in collecting and preserving interesting and valuable historical data relating to the District, especially of the period since it was set apart for Federal purposes. Little, however, has been written about the daily life and customs of the people who lived here. If someone equipped for the work and enthusiastic on the subject would undertake to tell us of the life, manners and customs of the people of this District during the early part of the nineteenth century, as Macanley did for the English people, it would be a valuable contribution to local history and make interesting reading.

Though feeling hesitation in taking up the time of this Society with matters of lighter character than are contained in the papers usually read before it, I will with your permission and craving your forbearance, tell you of some things which made an indelible impres-

sion on my mind during a childhood and early youth passed in my native town of Georgetown.

When I was a child Georgetown was a town of less than eight thousand inhabitants; an active commercial center with business reaching far into the neighboring States and commerce into distant seas. Its people were industrious, intelligent and enterprising; good citizens, self-reliant, and proud of their town. Life was quiet and homelike, and as travel to distant points was rarely undertaken and the summer hegira to watering places unknown, there was a wider acquaintance amongst the people, and a closer bond of neighborly friendship and intimacy than now exist. Like most towns in Maryland and Virginia the houses in the older, or western part, were of brick, built directly on the street, and except in few cases without grounds either in front or on the sides, the gardens for the sake of privacy being located in the rear. I mention these things to show the surroundings in which I passed my early years.

Negro slavery existed in the town until the time of the war between the States, and most of the domestic servants were slaves, hired by those not owning them generally by the year at moderate wages, with necessary clothing and medical attention added. When a little boy I was much with the servants who lived in the house and were recognized as members of the family. They were proud of the family to which they belonged, were acquainted with its traditions and loved to relate them. Many were aristocratic in their ideas, to whom changes in social position made no difference, as they classed everyone socially according to their recollection of what the person's ancestor had been. In every family there was a nurse, or "mammy," who cared for and exercised despotic authority over the

children, and would permit no interference with them except from the parent. They dearly loved "their children," as they affectionately called them, and were loved by them. Relations of mutual interest and affection existed between the members of the family and the servants in the house, very different from relations which now exist, where service only is regarded on the one side and pay on the other. This feeling of friendship existed not only between the family and those living in the house, but extended to those who had belonged to the family or had formerly lived with them. At Christmas all felt at liberty to come and partake of the holiday cheer, most of whom expected and received something in the way of a gift; whilst those of the immediate household hung up their stockings on Christmas Eve just as the children did.

There were many interesting customs amongst the negroes. Ordinarily they were not allowed on the streets after the town bell rang at nine o'clock at night, but at Christmas this restriction was removed, and as midnight approached bands of them would go through the streets singing hymns and carols before the houses of their white friends. I well remember how excited I was when waked up, taken from bed, wrapped up snugly, and carried to the window to listen to them. As many of the men had good voices the singing was unusually sweet. The following morning the leader of the band would call at the house and receive a token of appreciation in the way of small coin.

The annual May-day parade of the negro drivers should also be mentioned. In connection with the business of the town there were many carts, drays and wagons driven by negroes. On the first of May all of them had holiday and paraded the streets with vehicles and horses adorned with bright-colored papers, ribbons

and flowers; the drivers in their best with long white aprons decorated with huge brilliantly colored rosettes. Headed by a band they would march over the town, and then go to some neighboring wood to pass the day in feasting, dancing and singing.

As much time was passed within doors everything connected with the household was a matter of interest. There was no gas or running water in the house; no range or cook stove in the kitchen. Water was obtained either from wells or cisterns in the yard or from the public pumps on the street corners. Everyone had barrels or hogsheads in which rain water was collected for washing purposes, the breeding places of mosquitoes innumerable. The coop in which chickens and other fowls were kept and fattened was a necessary equipment. Light was furnished from candles, or from lamps fed with sperm or lard oil. Generally there was also a lantern for use out of doors when visiting at night, for the streets were but poorly lighted if at all. With the exception of a hard-coal open-grate fire in the parlor, sometimes supplemented by a bright cheerful wood fire in the then popular "Franklin" stove, the fires were of wood in the open fireplaces or in small air-tight stoves. The halls were generally very cold and except in large mansions unheated. Wood was supplied by country wagons and sawed into proper sizes by old negro men who followed the trade of "wood-sawyers." In the kitchen was a large open fireplace with wide hearth, in which was a swinging crane upon which the pots and kettles hung. In addition there were numerous ovens of various sizes, with griddles, frying pans and other cooking utensils; also a large tin "kitchen" placed on the hearth in front of the fire in which turkeys, fowls and roasts of beef were cooked. Generally on the side of the fireplace were hooks on



which Potomac herring, strung upon long sticks, were hung to dry. "Johnny-cake," made of cornmeal dough spread on barrel-head boards, was cooked by being propped up before the fire. The hot "Johnny-cake" and the roe herring of those days, which cannot be had by the present method of cooking, was food fit for the gods, and the delight of our childhood. We had abundance of molasses, not the tasteless syrups and things now called by that name, but thick golden New Orleans molasses, good to the taste and sight. In summer there was abundance of fruit, berries of all kinds, apricots, plums, peaches, pears and melons. Fish of every kind were abundant, as the town was a great fish market; in fact food of every kind was plentiful and moderate in price.

Christmas was the great day of the year, and for weeks housekeepers were busy preparing for it. Every variety of cake and every kind of sweets were made (for there was no confectioner to call upon), which with ham, turkey and other substantials, were spread out in the dining room. Open house was kept and friends and neighbors were expected to call. There was much holiday visiting amongst the children, in fact it was considered a slight if one's playmates failed to come in and partake of the "goodies" and admire the simple but no less prized presents. At all times of the year there was much hospitality, and whenever visitors called cake and wine, and on winter afternoons tea and thin wafers, were handed around by the servants.

Children of the same age played together, and when quite young the little negroes were welcome companions. Generally the playgrounds were in the enclosures about the houses, though occasionally the neighborhood was visited in search of adventure, and to climb up into the loft of a stable and roll over in the sweet

smelling hay was a special delight. In our neighborhood there was much to interest little boys. Nearby was the large and airy shop of a builder, who employed many skilled carpenters, where shutters, doors, window frames and other things, now manufactured by machinery, were made. Here, conditioned upon good behavior, the boys were permitted to go and watch the workmen; and the smell of the woods and shavings pleased as much as the skill of the men astonished. In this shop coffins were also made, and this branch of the business interested more than any other. I do not know what ambition filled the minds of all the boys, but I do know that some of them were so impressed with the mystery and fascination of coffin-making that they determined to be undertakers in after life. There were also several tanneries and a mill for grinding bark nearby. The vats, skins and everything connected with the tanneries, especially the gruesome stories of men who had been drowned in the vats, interested; but not so much so as the bark mill with the patient horses traveling around the ring and supplying the motor power. The mill was presided over by a rosy-faced, loud-voiced, kind-hearted giant, a pleasant host to the visiting boys. On work days they liked him, but on parade day, when as pioneer of one of the volunteer military companies he appeared in brilliant uniform with huge bear-skin hat on head, white sheepskin apron around waist, and glittering broad-axe on shoulder, he was simply magnificent, and considered by them a kind of demi-god.

The little boys were of course greatly interested in everything engaged in by those older and larger, and to be allowed to go with them or take part in their sport was considered a special favor. Generally the big boys, while they did not wish to be bothered with the little

ones, were kind and there were but few if any cases of bullying. Of course there was some fighting amongst the small boys, doing no harm so long as stones were not used, and under the code amongst them it was not considered the fair thing for boys in the same crowd to use stones.

As the boys grew older there was much fighting between the "crowds" living in different sections of the town, and between the boys of Washington and Georgetown. It was dangerous for a boy from one section of the town to venture alone into another, an attack and sometimes severe beating being the almost invariable result, the free use of stones adding an additional danger. Crowds from one part of the town would invade another part, armed with sticks and stones, and shrieking party cries. At first the march was unopposed, but rapidly the boys of the invaded district gathered and drove the enemy from the field. The severest conflicts, however, were between the boys of the two cities of Washington and Georgetown at the Paper Mill Bridge over Rock Creek, for possession of which they fought with great desperation. As there were only two or three constables to preserve peace by day and a like number of watchmen to guard property by night, these encounters were seldom interfered with. In our part of the town the constable was a large, powerful, dark-featured man, who was believed to have been a circus performer and to have killed his man. All the boys were afraid of him and would retire into the house on his approach. The night watchman was a small, round, jolly man, with kind words to the children, who were fond of and regarded him as their protector. He patrolled the town by night and called out the hours: "One o'clock, a fair bright night, all's well," or "Four o'clock, a sharp cold morning, all's well."

Children were then clothed very differently from now. Boys under eight years of age wore dresses with skirts to below the knees, buckled around the waist with belts, legs covered with stiff white paddies reaching to the ankles, and head with little velvet or cloth skull caps. Later their dress would be a cloth roundabout or jacket, generally worn open, adorned with brilliant brass buttons, and covered at the neck with huge stiff linen collars, and narrow trousers reaching to the ankles. The head dress would be straw hats in summer and cloth caps with stiff leather visors in winter. In spite of this uncomfortable costume they no doubt had equally as good a time as the boys of the present day.

The little children were sent at an early age to what were known as "Dames Schools," where they learned to read and write. The subjects taught were of the simplest nature, and I now believe the little ones were sent to these schools not for what they would learn but to be taken care of. As they grew up the boys went to the higher schools, where the hours were long and the holidays few and far between, at the head of which were men whose reputations as scholars and administrators extended far beyond the limits of the District. Here close and lifetime friendships between the students were made. When the war between the States commenced many of them went into the Confederate and a lesser number into the Union army. At the end of the contest the survivors came home and old intimacies were resumed, and I do not know of a single case where friendships between them were interfered with in the slightest degree.

One of the first things I can remember is in connection with the Mexican war. The negro servants, though they knew nothing about Mexico nor about war, did know that a war was going on and that many men from

the town were engaged in it. It was a topic of continual talk amongst them, and of course the children heard them talk. They would point to the long line of crows winging their way south in the morning and homewards in the afternoon, and tell us they flew to the battlefields of Mexico to feast upon the bodies of soldiers who had been killed. These superstitious people as well as the credulous children believed this to be true. Later the volunteers, clad in their light blue uniforms and caps, returned from Mexico, many of them marching through Bridge Street on their way home, and though very young we were taken to see them. They generally crossed the river over the aqueduct bridge and were entertained by George Washington Parke Custis at the great spring on his Arlington estate. Just before or after his election to the presidency, General Zachary Taylor was entertained by the people of the town at the Union Hotel, where I saw the then popular hero, and can distinctly recall his appearance. Many officers who had taken part in the war visited the town, and the children were delighted to see and hear them, though I doubt if much was heard about their military deeds, soldiers generally being modest and little given to talking about their personal achievements.

Children had but little money in those days, but in spite of the fact that there were no soda-water fountains, slot machines, nor moving-picture shows, they had but little difficulty in getting rid of their pennies. In many of the small one-story brick houses, peculiar to old Georgetown, negro "Aunties" were ready to welcome and furnish them with sweets at the universal price of one cent. Honey cakes, thin and intensely sweet, horse cakes of gingerbread in shape resembling no animal in nature or mythology, large balls of black taffy and long twisted sticks of yellow taffy, were at-

tractive on account of quantity rather than quality. Being made from pure materials they were probably less injurious than the low-priced sweets now sold.

As in all river towns the water front had great fascinations for the boys and along it much of their time was passed in summer. They learned to swim when very young, and as they grew older became perfectly at home in the water and expert divers. At the wharves, which extended along the whole front of the town, were generally numbers of vessels loading and unloading. Water Street, which was occupied by the wholesale merchants, offered many attractions. It was a busy place, the street crowded with carts and drays, and at certain seasons of the year with lines of large covered wagons, drawn by four or six horse teams with bows of bells on shoulders, and loaded with produce from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia; the warehouses filled with flour, tobacco, whiskey, salt, grain and other merchandise. One place was a source of never-ending delight, the old warehouses on the western part of the street near the aqueduct bridge, which in the early days of the town had been used as depots by the Indian traders. From time to time the iron-bound doors were opened and the boys allowed to rummage around. By digging in the moist dirt floors they were able to find Indian beads and bells. The beads were like sections of pipe stems about an inch long made of highly glazed earthenware, and in color red, blue, white and particolors, and being of varied degrees of rarity had established value amongst and were used for trading purposes by the boys. Almost in front of these warehouses on the river bank was a large saw-mill of heavy timbers, not enclosed, where the logs which had been floated down the river were hauled up and sawed into lumber. Next to this mill was an iron furnace or

smelter where to the delight of the boys the workmen, generally naked to the waist, moved about in the glare of the molten metal. Then there were the numerous flour mills and a cotton factory which we were allowed on rare occasions to visit, the intricate machinery of which inspired admiration and astonishment. Another place we liked to get permission to visit was Brown's bakery, on the north side of the street, where the ship-biscuit, or hard-tack, used in the United States Navy, was baked. The place was clean and permeated with a sweet moist smell, and to see the process of mixing the flour, forming the dough in shapes, putting it into and taking it from the ovens, and packing the biscuits, was interesting; but to be presented with a large warm newly-baked biscuit was a delight. A short distance lower was the Corporation Fish Wharf, where thousands of shad and hundreds of thousands of herring were brought by the small river vessels and sold. Here the fish were cleaned for salting and packing by negro fish-women, rough and profane of speech, but generally kind to the boys of their acquaintance. In front of the wharf, which was a vile-smelling place, the boys would fish, supplied with bait by the fish-women, and as great numbers of small fish were attracted by the offal swept into the river, as many as desired could easily be caught. Still lower down was the Dodge warehouse, a never ending source of delight. The firm was engaged in trading in their own vessels with the West Indies and South America, and were large importers of sugar and molasses. Each year a sale took place, the wharves being covered with hogsheds, and buyers from the large cities of the North attending. On these occasions, the boys were allowed to move about through the rows of hogsheds supplied with long straws, which they would dip

through the bunghole open for inspection and feast on the molasses drawn out. The counting house was capacious, and decorated with curios brought from the tropics, such as flying fish, shark's jaws, and sword-fish and saw-fish. On the sale days elaborate lunches were served, with fine cigars and every variety of drinkables for the guests. Out from the counting room extended a wide platform overlooking the river, furnished with chairs and benches, which on warm summer afternoons was used as a meeting and lounging place by the friends of the proprietors. At that time there was a great distinction between wholesale "merchants" and retail "shopkeepers," and a line distinctly drawn, the former being within the magic social circle, the latter outside of it. The captains of the trading vessels were very kind to the boys, and on their return from a voyage would give them sugar cane, oranges and other tropical fruit; invite them to join at meals (and how greatly enjoyed was what we considered sailor's food); and loan them the small boats for rowing and sculling.

The river above the town as far as the Little Falls bridge was often visited by way of the tow-path. This took us past the celebrated Foxall Foundry, where cannon for the United States Navy were made, and around which in every direction castings of guns and balls were scattered. And also past Edes Mill, situated at the point where the canal of the old Potomac Company entered the river. At this latter place fish larger than those to be found in front of the town could be caught, and, as we were on friendly terms with the miller's family and had the freedom of the grounds, it was a charming spot to pass the warm bright days of early summer. On the canal bank opposite the mill lived a man, who on account of his great strength was



known as "Bull" Frizzle. On him the boys always turned admiring looks as in their estimation he was a hero, having on the occasion of an accident at the Little Falls bridge crawled under a huge beam, and unassisted prized it up by the strength of his broad back, thereby saving the life of the man pinned beneath it. Above the mill were several fishing shores, and it was a delight to watch the boats buffeted by the swift rapids and see the well-filled nets dragged to shore. In times of floods the lower part of the town was in a state of great excitement; merchants busy in removing goods to places of safety, sailors working to secure vessels at the wharves from being carried away, and fishermen and dwellers on the waterside risking their lives in securing valuables coming down in the current or supplies of drift wood for the winter. When the water was unusually high every point of vantage was crowded with spectators.

Just west of Georgetown College and north of the canal road was a large and beautiful sheet of water known as "College Pond," the favorite skating place of the young people, and older ones also, living in the western part of the town. This is mentioned for the reason that but few of the present generation know anything of this beautiful pond which no longer exists, having gradually been filled with washings from the surrounding hills.

Much of the time was passed in the country near the town, more along the valley of Rock Creek than elsewhere. Our wanderings took us long distances up that stream and over the tracts now covered by the park, and though always beautiful its beauty did not then impress me as it now does. The land bordering on the creek was held in large parcels and occupied as homes by the owners, which in a great measure accounts for

the fact that the woods were not destroyed nor the natural beauty interfered with.

During the Fall great droves of cattle and flocks of sheep from western Virginia were driven through town. Gathered together at Drovers Rest about two miles west of the town, they were driven to Baltimore and eastern cities. Some days they numbered many thousands and filled West (now P) Street from early morning to late afternoon. Generally there was no trouble, but occasionally a wild steer ran amuck to the general alarm. In addition large flocks of turkeys, hundreds of them, were driven from lower Maryland. Their slow and deliberate movements and constant gobbling never failed to attract attention. When any one wished a turkey for dinner, it was only necessary to go to the enclosure where they were kept, select a bird, and pay for it what would now be considered almost nothing. I doubt if a drove of turkeys has come to this District within the past fifty years or more.

Of course there were fires and a fire company, and nothing caused greater excitement amongst the boys than the wild clanging of the alarm bell, which hung in the belfry of the engine house and was heard all over the town. They considered "The Old Vigilant" the greatest engine and its men the bravest crew in the whole country. Though not permitted to run with the "machine," they would run along near it, and watch and criticize every movement of the men. This was before the days of a paid fire department, and the members of the company were all volunteers. There were two machines, a suction and an engine; the former drew in the water and the latter threw it upon the fire; both were drawn through the streets by hand and also worked by hand. In cases of large fires the Washington companies came over to assist, and whilst during

the progress of the fire all worked harmoniously together, so soon as it was extinguished fighting between the rival companies almost always began. These encounters were topics of conversation for weeks after the event.

The subject of politics would from time to time disturb the pleasant relations existing between the boys, as they were as fixed in their political leanings and as ardent Democrats or Whigs as their elders. During national campaigns feelings ran very high, each boy had a pole in his yard from which floated a party flag, and the abuse and vituperation indulged in by the two parties passed freely between them. When the election was over, peace returned and politics were banished from their discussions. Partisan feeling in those days ran very high and frequent political meetings were held, but being at night the boys saw but little of them. After an important election, however, the victors gave expression to their joy by torch-light processions, illumination of residences and great bonfires in various parts of the town, to which the children were taken and which they enjoyed more than the grown folks.

In the extreme western part of the town, near the Catholic Church and College and Convent, dwelt the Irish, a wild-looking, undisciplined and turbulent people, different in every way from their countrymen amongst us at the present day, both men and women being much given to fighting and drinking. It was believed, and was probably true, that no one could control them except their priests. St. Patrick's Day was the great occasion of the year with them, when, headed by a band, decorated with green regalia, and bearing banners, they paraded the streets. Many were the fights which took place along the line of march, for they were impatient of criticism or derisive remarks, especially

after having imbibed a little. Frequently when the morning of the "Day" dawned a "stuffed paddy" would be found hanging from a tree or sign; the figure a suit of clothes stuffed with straw, surmounted by a dilapidated beaver hat, with a string of fish and potatoes around the neck, an empty whiskey bottle sticking from the pocket, and generally labeled "Paddy got drunk on fish and potatoes." The sight of one of these figures on St. Patrick's Day was to an Irishman more infuriating than a red handkerchief to a mad bull.

The Fourth of July was a great day, and for many years was celebrated at Parrott's Woods, now the site of Oak Hill Cemetery. All the Protestant Sunday Schools participated. In the morning they met at the various churches, and then uniting marched to the grounds headed by a band. Each school had a distinctive color, red, blue, green, yellow and white, and each scholar was decorated with a rosette of the same. Each school had its banner, and to be a banner bearer was considered a great honor. Heading the different schools were two boys, called "pivot boys," bearing small flags, and on turning a corner these boys crossed their flags and the schools marched under them. On arriving at the woods the day was celebrated. Patriotic songs were sung, the Star Spangled Banner never being omitted, and addresses made by young college graduates. Later in the day speeches were made by the elders. Townsmen of all classes participated, and barrels of lemonade and abundance of eatables of every kind were provided; everything was free and all were welcomed. After a somewhat strenuous day parents and children returned home tired out but patriotically happy.

The needs of the town required many taverns, and on High Street (now Wisconsin Avenue) were several

much frequented by teamsters, drovers and small farmers. Attached to each were large courtyards with extensive stabling where the many wagons and teams could be cared for. In the late afternoon these taverns were busy and hustling places. In addition there were a number of hotels, the principal one being the Union Hotel, formerly Crawfords, which occupied the north-east corner of M and 30th Streets, with additions extending northwardly to Olive Avenue, which in its day was a famous hostelry and as such continued for many years after the war. In the days before my birth it was the stopping place of the most distinguished men in public life. William Wirt in a letter written to his wife from Georgetown on October 14, 1814, not two months after the British had burned the Capitol, says:

“Here I am at Crawfords. I am surrounded by a vast crowd of legislators and gentlemen, assembled here for the races, which are to commence tomorrow. The races? amidst the ruins and desolation of Washington.”

In my day it was the home of many ladies and gentlemen, friends of our family, and I went there frequently. The main building differed but little from others, but north of this and running north upon 30th Street to the next street was a wing of one or two stories high and one room deep, the doors opening into a covered corridor supported by brick arches, beyond which was a large courtyard paved with stone. The rooms along this corridor were occupied entirely by gentlemen, many being planters from the lower river counties of Maryland and Virginia. On the opposite side of the courtyard was a large building in which was a fine ball-room known as “Pompean Hall” from its mural decorations in which public entertainments and functions were held. In the older days on more than one occasion parties had gone from these festivities to the duelling

ground, resulting in one instance at least in the death of a participant. In the rear of the court were stables in which carriages owned by or for the use of guests were kept.

Transportation was attended with considerable discomfort for those not blessed with their own conveyances. There were two or three public hacks driven by old colored men, used on rare occasions or for funerals, though generally as a mark of respect all walked to the graveyard. Two of these funerals where all attending were on foot made an impression on my mind which is still vivid. One, that of Archbishop Eccleston of Baltimore, who was greatly interested in the education of girls under the care of the Sisters of the Visitation, and died in a small house on Fayette Street near the Convent in 1851 during a visit to Georgetown. His remains were borne through the streets, on the way to the railroad depot on Pennsylvania Avenue near the Capitol, attended by acolytes swinging censers, lighted candles and many priests and church dignitaries. An impressive and unusual sight! The other, that of Mr. Bodisco, the Russian Minister, in 1854, when on the way to Oak Hill Cemetery his two nephews Boris and Waldimer, both very handsome young men, clad in white uniforms, marched on either side of the hearse, accompanied by the attaches of his legation and officers of his household, also in uniform. For those who had business at the executive departments in Washington, or "the city" as we called it, and were too old or did not care to walk, there were omnibuses which went over in the morning and returned in the early afternoon; and later omnibuses which made hourly trips. Stages ran every day to Rockville, and once or more a week to Leesburg or neighboring towns. A steamboat, the old *Salem*, made regular trips down

the Potomac to the river landings, and the canal carried many passengers up the river to the western country.

Of course things interested the boys more than persons, but there were many characters in the town who made an impression upon our minds by what appeared peculiarities or by what was said about them. One or two tottering old men said to have been Revolutionary soldiers, old gentlemen still clinging to their knee breeches, old ladies with turbans on head and canes in hand. Then from time to time men distinguished in the history of the country drove or rode through the streets, the observed of all observers. To the boys, however, the most interesting sight was the foreign ministers, residing in the town, when on state occasions they appeared in brilliant uniforms, and in the case of the Russian minister seated in a gilded coach with driver and footman clad in bright uniforms. Then there were the high leather-spring coaches of residents, and old-fashioned two-wheeled gigs driven by old gentlemen. The people and surroundings were in almost every respect different from those of the present day.

Perhaps you have wondered why I have said nothing in regard to girls; but you must remember that the boys to whom I have referred were under fifteen years of age, and the fair sex, whatever the influence exerted in later years, occupied but little of their attention. They were real boys, not young gentlemen, who loved the open, played in the streets free from automobiles and motorcycles, and made their excursions on foot no matter how great the distance traveled. Nothing was thought of tramping out to the house of some boy friend in the country five or six miles from home, and after a strenuous day in the fields and woods tramping back again, and many holidays were happily passed in improvised camps where first lessons in simple cooking

were acquired. They were just boys, strong, active, interested in and prying into everything, and though full of mischief for the most part fairly good. The life they led was in no way the life of the city boy of the present day, but rather that of boys in small country towns. Their days were full of adventure and they got much out of life. After many years it is pleasant to recall the surroundings and occupation of my childhood days.





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